

Weaving the Word

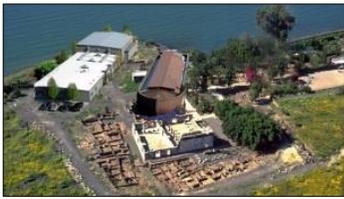
Parting Ways

July 23, 2017

Welcome to where we're learning to stop resisting God's love!

How firmly do you resist the devil? There's a *condition* to resisting him *effectively*.

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. – James 4:7-8a NIV



Which brings up another question: **How firmly do you resist God?**

Resist the Lord and you will flee from Him!

Jesus' big day is coming to a close in Capernaum (a village the size of our parking lot). Whenever Jesus wasn't traveling, this is where He lived and taught and healed.



About His home away from home, He later says:



And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, **[of Sodom-and-Gomorrah, fire-and-brimstone, Lot's-wife-turned-to-salt, fame (Gen 19:1-26)]** it would have remained to this day. But ... it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you." – Matthew 11:23-24 NIV



Capernaum is the wild-west of Jesus' ministry. Several showdowns in this little town. Some submitted. Most resisted. Here's a headcount of those who went toe-to-toe with Jesus. Tell me if they resisted or submitted.



His **mother and brothers** who couldn't get to Him because of the crowd: resisted or submitted? *Resisted!* They came to take Him by force because they thought He was crazy. (Mk 3:21)



How about the **crippled woman** who was the first to be set free on that Sabbath morning? (Lk 13:1-13) And, the **synagogue ruler** who said to wait until sunset to go to Jesus for healing. (Lk 13:14)

The **blind, mute, demon-possessed man** who was healed. (Mt 12:22)



The **religious rulers** who said Jesus' power came from the devil? (Mt 12:24)

Jesus' true brothers and sisters who chose to sit at His feet. (Mk 3:34)



The **man with swollen limbs** who was healed at brunch with the Pharisees. (Lk 14:1-4)

The **wind** and the **waves**. (Lk 8:25)



The **legion of demons** who begged to go into the pigs. (Mk 5:9-13)

Everyone who resists will eventually submit.



The **townspeople** who then begged Jesus to leave their land. (Mk 3:34)

The **de-possessed Gadarene** who begged to leave with Jesus. (Mk 5:18-19)



The **paralyzed man** lowered to Jesus while He was trying to open the eyes of the Pharisees. (Mt 9:2-3)

Matthew, who was called from his tax booth. (Mt 9:9)



The **scoundrels** at Matthew's sinner-dinner. (Mt 9:10)

Jairus, the synagogue ruler whose daughter had died. (Mt 9:18)



The **woman who snuck up** and touched Jesus' cloak on the way. (Mt 9:20-21)

The **mourners** who mocked Him. (Mt 9:23-25)



Jairus' wife. (Mk 5:40)

Jesus' big day parallels His last day.



In the morning He's rejected by His people. At sunset He departs and falls asleep. But, rises and overcomes the very laws of nature; and overpowers the demonic forces in the grave/tomb.



Then, He returns, in the morning, and opens His house *and God's Word* to those *dead in religion*; and invites those *sick with sin* to dine with Him.

He takes away fear, raises the dead, and restores the family. And then, He leaves to return to His father's house (his *step-father's*, in Nazareth).



First, we've got three more *submitters* to add to the list; so, let's pick up the story as Jesus leaves Jairus' house to gather His things and go.

Only Matthew reveals this piece of the story.

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “**Have mercy on us, Son of David!**” When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “**Do you believe that I am able to do this?**” “Yes, Lord,” they replied. [Do *what?* What did they ask Him for? “*Have mercy on us*”] Then he touched their eyes and said, “**According to your faith will it be done to you**”; [Their faith in what? In Jesus as the “Son of David” who has authority to grant God’s mercy, according to God’s Word. **It’s not faith if it’s just a feeling; it’s got’a be grounded in God’s Word**] and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, “**See that no one knows about this.**” [How? *Keep pretending they’re blind?*] But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region. – Matthew 9:27-31 NIV

This is how they show their *gratitude*? Yes! *By obeying.*

They spread the news “**about Him**” not “**about this**”. Seems these two are equipped to proclaim Him as the Son of David, *from Scripture*. So, **what kind of blindness is He healing here: eyes or heart?** Paul says he prays for the Ephesian believers, that ...

... the **eyes of your heart** may be enlightened in order that you may **know the hope** to which he has called you ... – Ephesians 1:18 NIV

Every Sunday, before I come up here, I ask for all of our eyes to be opened, and our ears to hear, and our hearts to soften.

He may be simply healing blind eyes. But, I just find it odd that these **blind men follow Him from Jairus’ and then into His house**, where, that same day, He’d gathered the Pharisees to heal *their* blindness with God’s Word. (Lk 5:17; Mk 2:2; Mt 13:13)

While *they* [Jesus and the two men] were going out, **a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus**. [Interesting, how this guy is “*brought to Jesus*”, but the blind guys “*came to Him*”] And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.” But the Pharisees said, “**It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.**” – Matthew 9:32-34 NIV

And, **that’s what happens when freewill meets a hard heart.**

The ultimate statement of unbelief *bookends* a day that began with these very same Pharisees pronouncing this very same judgement. (Mt 12:24)

But then, **to resist the Lord is to submit to the devil.**

After 36 hours of action-packed astonishing signs and wonders, their resistance hasn’t diminished one jot. Just goes to show: **The posture of the heart determines the openness of the mind.**

And so, they remain blind and left behind to sink to the depths, as ...

Jesus left there and went to his hometown ... [of Nazareth] – Mark 6:1a NIV

The day begins with a synagogue ruler saying if you go to Jesus you'll violate the Law! And ends with a synagogue ruler basically saying, "It doesn't matter if an unclean woman touched you; because, *You are the Law.*"

The day begins with eyewitnesses asking their "seers" if Jesus is the Son of David; (Mt 12:23; Mk3:22) and ends with the blind declaring that He is! And, it all begins and ends with *absolute opposition*; because: **He's given us the power to persist in resisting His love.**

So, **why do you resist Him?** Well, truth is, **Truth has a price. It costs the discomfort of our pride, the inconvenience of our calendar, and the false security of our fictitious authority.**



[Jesus said] "Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed." – John 3:19b-20 NIV

It isn't that we lack the Light; it's that we love the dark. That's why we resist His Word. It opens our eyes. And that means war.

You think it's a book? Silly. It's a battleground.

That's why it's normal to *not* want to read it in any life-altering way.

You've probably heard that we can miss God's Kingdom by 18" if we fail to get it from our head to our heart. True. But, we can still miss it by 18" ... if it doesn't return to renew your mind.

Grace and peace be yours in abundance **through the knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness **through our knowledge** of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. **Through these** he has given us his very great and precious **promises**, so that **through them** you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith **goodness**; [action] and to goodness, **knowledge**; and to knowledge, **self-control**; and to self-control, **perseverance**; [consistency] and to perseverance, **godliness**; [reverence] and to godliness, **brotherly kindness**; [good deeds] and to brotherly kindness, **love**. [Sharing Truth] For if you possess these qualities in **increasing measure**, they will keep you from being **ineffective** and **unproductive** in your **knowledge** of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is **nearsighted** and **blind**, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. – 2 Peter 1:2-9 NIV

The original sin was trying to be like God. Jesus is simply leading us to the sobering reality that we're not. And, *that's* why we resist Him. But, **we'll never really submit to God and resist the devil until we whole-heartedly choose to give up the Lordship of our life.**